(b) the number of anthrax letters and the number of suspected anthrax letters received so far before and after the Afghan war; and

(c) the measures taken up to identify suspected letters before their distribution?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) Nil.

(b) (i) Number of Anthrax letters received — Nil

(ii) Number of suspicious Anthrax letters received — 76

(c) Guidelines have been issued to all the Postal Circles regarding handling of suspected articles containing anthrax. Copies of Universal Postal Union and United States Postal Inspection Service Manuals which provide tips to identify suspected articles and preventive measures have been circulated to all concerned.

Short Distance Mobile Telephone Services

453. MISS MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Department of Telecommunication (DoT) has decided to accept the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India's (TRAI) recommendations allowing basic telecom operators to offer short-distance mobile telephone services based on Wireless in Local Loop (WILL) technology; and

(b) if so, to what extent the current cellular telephone rates would be cheaper?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) TRAI's recommendation has been accepted for allowing the usage of hand-held telephone sets to subscribers of Basic Telephone Service within the local areas typically Tehsils on Wireless Access Systems.

(b) Domain of above permission for Basic Teledphone Service, is clearly different from that of the GSM based Cellular Mobile Telephone Service. No airtime charges are levied as tariff on subscribers utilizing the facility in (a) above.

Caller Identification Facilities

454. MISS MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to introduce Caller identification facilities at all telephone exchanges in all major cities;

(b) by when Caller identification facilities would be available at all telephone exchanges throughout the country; and

(c) whether Government are considering any proposal to provide the facility free of charge to subscribers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) and (b) The Caller Identification Facility is presently available from most of the telephone exchanges. However, in a few exchanges constituting about 2% of the total installed switching capacity, it is not possible to provide this facility due to technical constraints. The calling line identification facility would be available even from these exchanges, once the existing exchanges are replaced by the new technology exchanges. Private operators haved also started installation of exchanges in many places. Once their exchanges with this facility are available, this constraint will be removed. However, no time frame is possible at this stage.

(c) No Sir.

Telephone Connection in Fake Names

†455. SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that heavy loss is incurred by the telephone department due to releasing telephones in fake names at several places in the country;

(b) if so, whether Government have taken any step till now to investigate in the matter; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Achievements of Telecom Revolution in Villages

456. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Private Firms, which are supposed to bring telecome revolution in rural areas, have achieved only 0.6% of the target;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.